

CONVERSATION IN SOCIAL INTERACTION AMONG TODDLERS

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ABSTRACT

Conversations among toddlers have distinctive characteristics that are different from adults. The characteristic of this conversation needs to be examined with the *objective* of describing the conversation structural element so that the results can be used to enrich the theory of language and can be used as the basis for the development of children's language skills. This study uses *quantitative design* with the subject children among 2-5 years old. *The results* showed that the structural elements of conversation among toddlers have many categories which are: initiation, response, feedback, response as initiation, informative, and re-initiation. Toddlers conversation occurs in a short rotation, one or two rounds of conversation.

Keywords: structure of conversation, social interaction, toddlers

1. INTRODUCTION

Living among humans has variety forms of interaction and different types of situations. Surakhmad [1] said that the process of interaction is possible because there is the fact that humans is creature that have a great social nature. This social nature encourages them to contact each other to fulfill their needs.

Judging from the medium, the interaction can be divided into verbal interaction and non-verbal interaction. A verbal interaction uses language as the medium and non-verbal interactions using specific codes besides language as medium. Judging from the perpetrator, Sampson [2] talks that the interaction can be distinguished into two which are interaction among other classes and schools and the interaction of family and community. Classes and schools interactions are formal interaction, while family and community interactions are informal. In informal situation, toddlers often establish interaction with each other. Interactions that occur to the toddlers in this study in a non-formal situation are called social interaction.

Toddlers language can be easily recognize when there is interaction between them. Sampson [2] revealed that within interaction, occur a contract between individual with utilizing verbal media and non-verbal media. Edmonson [3] also said that the medium of an interaction is one of component of interaction beside other components, for example, turn taking and the relevant sequence.

Within social interaction among toddlers, it seems the presence of a *medium* dominates the interaction activities. Interactions among toddlers in our environment are always utilizing the medium as the focus of the interaction. According to the theory of constructivism (Vygotsky), game is media that can build a child's mental structure. In fact, Vygotsky said that game is the creation of imaginary situations that bridges the child with the outside world or society [4]. Through game, children can learn to overcome the encountered difficulties.

Toddlers interaction usually occurs not far from the family and school environment. *Setting* has major influence in the interaction because *setting* is part of interaction components, including one unit of interaction events in addition to the situation unit and unit acts [5].

Toddlers' interaction is often manifested in the form of a conversation (communication). Mey [6] said that basically the conversation is a manifestation of the use of language to interact. Ibnu [7] confirmed that the conversation is the most fundamental form of activity undertaken by humans to establish a relationship with each other. By conducting a conversation, people are able to express their thoughts and feelings, and also can exchange information to meet their needs. This also occurred in children and toddlers.

Conversation has a purpose or a specific function. Ervin-Tripp [8] considers that the interactions function, in the form of a conversation, is an action effect to the speaker. By using the viewpoint of listener response to the speaker, he divides these functions into six types, namely: (1) to request information, services, and commendations; (2) to request the social response, either explicitly or implicitly in which can be applause, words of sympathy, laughter, hugs, or a response that indicates anger; (3) to convey information or interpretation; (4) to deliver a monologue expression, expression of joy, anger, *ngudo roso*, or mumble; (5) for daily routine such as approval, gratitude, remission, or provision of services; and (6) to avoid a boring conversation.

Conversation is classified as interactional discourse and includes one of the components of interaction [9]. As interactional discourse, conversations made to improve social relations in society. Relationship with each other can be established through conversation. It also occurs in children which mean they use a conversation. Their interaction with other people is usually embodied in the form of asking activities. With a question, they will get something they want.

Brown dan Yule [10] said that the conversation pertained in the use of language that is interpersonal. The use of language aims to create interpersonal relationship with a sense of friendship. Toddlers' relationship can occur due to their ability to talk. This suggests that the ability to speak is the key to the establishment of interaction between people.

Conversation has certain characteristic. Cook [11] explains that the conversation can be recognized from the following characteristics: (1) speech in the conversation rather than in practical task; (2) The participants of conversation has no power to compel each other; (3) The number of participants is in a small group conversation; (4) turn of speech occur within a short time; and (5) the speech aimed at hearers inside the group not outside the group.

Related to the participants of this conversation, there are some tasks that need an attention. So that a conversation can take place properly, the speaker should be able to maintain their conversation. Grice argues, to maintain a conversation

that can take place as expected, there are a few things to note. Grice put forward guidelines known as the *maxim of cooperative behavior* which has the following four principles [12].

- a. Principle of quality means that just says something that fits the purpose.
- b. Principle of quality means to say only something right away.
- c. Principle of relation means just says something appropriate and related to the discussion.
- d. Principle of way means to say something in a way that is clear, simple, concise, coherent, and no taxa.

Conversation seen from the structure element preceded by the trigger or initiator which serves as the opening of interaction (denoted I). Triggers followed by a response (denoted R). Response can be either verbal or non-verbal acts. Response can also be followed by other acts as a feedback (feedback symbolized F). Advance is arbitrary. Therefore, Stubbs revises the structure of the exchange proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard became [IR (F)], means that the trigger is followed by the response and may be followed by further that is arbitrary [13 and 14].

Rani [15] said that the element of conversation has the following characteristic. *Initiation* characterized by: (1) predict another utterance, (2) serves as a trigger, (3) cannot be predicted by previous utterance, and (4) Cannot exist in the end of the utterance. Because of initiation was in the beginning of a conversation, and then semantically can be understood without knowing the previous utterance. *Response* has a characteristic: (1) can be predicted by previous utterance (+ predictable), (2) can occupy the lid at the end of the exchange (+terminal), (3) cannot predict the next utterance (- predicted), and (4) cannot occupy a trigger or the opening exchanges (-I). *Feedback* characterized by: (1) cannot be predicted by previous utterance, (2) cannot predict the previous utterance, (3) usually occupy the end of the exchange, and (4) cannot occupy the early part of exchange. *Response as initiation* characterized by: (1) can be predicted by previous utterance, (2) can predict the previous utterance, (3) cannot occupy the end of exchange, and (4) cannot occupy opening exchange. *Informative* characterized by: (1) cannot be predicted by previous utterance, (2) cannot predict the next utterance, (3) can occupy the trigger, and (4) cannot occupy the end of conversation. *Reinitiation* characterized by: (1) can predict the following utterance, (2) cannot be predicted by the previous utterance, and (3) cannot occupy the opening and closing from conversation.

Considering the discussion above, this study aims to analyze the conversation among toddlers. Morris and Wardhany [16] said that conversation analysis focusing on interaction within conversation, such as the motion of communicator and how they manage and arrange the order of speech as depicted in their behavior. Specifically, this study aims to describe (1) element of structure and (2) the purpose behind the conversation in toddlers' social interaction. On the basis of that problem of study, the results of this study expected to be useful for the development of the theory of language, especially sociolinguistics and as the basis for curriculum development, determining school policy, and the development of children's language.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses qualitative design [17] in line with conversation discourse analysis [18]. The subjects of the research are children's under five years old who live in Malang. Subject is specified into children who have started to speak Indonesian (2 – 5 years). Research data structure in conversation among toddlers in social interaction has been overshadowed by the meaning and setting, as well as the purpose of the conversation. Data were collected by direct observation technique assisted with *tape recorder*, data collection table, and data analysis guides. The collected data were analyzed through many procedures which is: (1) data validity checks, (2) transcribe the data into table of data, (3) data classification and coding, (4) data identification, (5) data analysis in terms of element of structure of conversation, (6) result determiner, and (7) interpret the results.

3. RESULTS

In line with the objective of study, the results of this study are (1) structural element, (2) context of conversation, and (3) the purpose behind conversation among toddlers. All three are described below.

a. Structural Elements of Conversation among Toddlers

In terms of structural elements, conversation among toddlers consists of: (1) initiation (I); (2) response (R); (3) feedback (F); (4) response as initiation (RI); (5) informative (Inf); and (6) re-initiation (Ir). Each of these elements is described and given the structure in the following example.

• Initiation (I)

In conversation among toddlers there are elements of conversation that are categorized as initiation. Initiation triggered hearer to conduct the next utterance. Conversation among toddlers initiation has variation: (1) question, (2) greeting, (3) command, (4) invitation, (5) complaints, (6) request, and (7) able. For example, speech is classified as initiation can be seen in the following quote.

Quote (1)

Lintang: "Mana Capa, mana Capa?"
Syafa: (come closer, silent).

Quotes (1) in italics session consist of initiation which is question. The question was spoken by Lintang because she wants to find Capa (Syafa) who is called did not answer in the form of speech. Utterance above is initiation because (1) serves as a trigger for a response from the other person (Syafa approaching), (2) Syafa's response is unpredictable, and she remains silent, just approach Lintang (4) cannot be the end of conversation. Lintang's conversation with Syafa only happens in one round because Syafa give no response to Lintang.

• Response (R)

One element in the interaction among toddlers is the response. Response is a reaction of the initiation. Utterance which occupied the category of response in conversation among toddlers have this kind of (1) action, (2) statement, (3) invitation, (4) answer, (5) advice, (6) complaints, (7) prohibition, (8) request, (9) able, (10) information, and (11) blank response. For example, the conversation which has the response can be seen in the following quote.

Quote (2)

Syafa: "Tang, sepedaan, tak pegangi!"
Lintang: (*Shaking head*).

Quote (2) in italics is a response which is action. Lintang does not respond to Syafa's invitation to ride a bike in the form of speech, but he responded in the form of shaking her head, which means *reject* the invitation to Syafa, not in speech performance. Response of the action may be *acceptance*, means the hearer accept what speaker wants. Conversation between Syafa and Lintang only happens in one round because the response of Lintang's shaking head is not responded back by Syafa.

• Feedback (F)

In conversation among toddlers, one of the elements is feedback, the utterance that made to give a feedback to the initiation. In conversation between toddlers, the feedback is found, namely in the form of information and expression of feelings, as the following example.

Quote (3)

Andre : "Aku juga pernah berenang, enak, ya?"
Disya : "Iya..., enak... ha... ha... ha... (Laugh)."
"Aku pernah berenang, tapi pakai pelampung, enak..."

Quote (3) in italics is a continuation of Disya response. Disya response Andre by answering. Disya's answer not only meets the question properly, but still continued with the information that Disya have also swim and wear a buoy. This information is also accompanied with the expressions of feeling good. Andre conversation with Disya only happens in one round because Andre did not response to Disya's response.

• Response as Initiation (RI)

In conversation among toddlers there is an element that is response as initiation. Speech in conversation among toddler classified as response as initiation have variations (1) question, (2) command, (3) information, (4) complaints, (5) invitation, (6) statement, (7) answer, (8) advice, (9) rejection, (10) acceptance, (11) request, (12) prohibition, (13) expression of feelings, (14) action, and (15) sound as expression. For example, response as initiation can be seen in quote below.

Quote (4)

Lintang: "Habis!" (meatball falls).
Syafa: "Itu, minta Mbak Putri!"
Lintang: "Habis!"

Quote (4) in italics are the response as well as the initiation of the conversation among toddlers. Syafa respond to Lintang's complaints in the form of command. This command also functioning as the initiation of the emergences of the next utterance, that utterance is, "Habis!" Lintang and Syafa's conversation happens in two rounds. The first round shows by the initiation of Lintang which said, "Habis!" (Meatball falls) which responded by Syafa, "Itu, minta Mbak Putri!" This response, become the initiation of the emergences of the next response. The second round is in the form of response initiation, "Itu, minta Mbak Putri," who responded by Lintang with, "Habis!"

• Informative (Inf)

In the conversation among toddlers there are element called informative. Informative is a form of a speech which occupied initiation statements or information. For example, element which occupy an informative can be seen in the following quote.

Quote (5)

Happy: "Kata ibuku lho kalau suka bohong, nanti kalau mati jadi babi."
(Damai, paused as he thinking).
Damai: Ya ndak ta... kalau orang mati ya diam, terus tidak bernafas,
cuma diam tok, masak mau jadi babi,... ha... ha...
(Laugh at Happy)."

Quote (5) in italic occupied initiation containing information. Initiation that contains information in a conversation called informative. Happy informs Damai that a people who used to tell a lies will be a pig when they are dead. It seems that Damai reject that information by saying, "Ya ndak ta." The conversation between Happy and Damai only happens in one round because Happy did not respond Damai's responses.

• Re-initiation (Ir)

In conversation among toddlers, re-initiation often appears. The re-initiation happens because the opponent usually did not respond to the speaker, so the speaker repeats the initiation. Re-initiation elements are: (1) command, (2) question, (3) information, (4) action, and (5) complaints. The following quote contains re-initiation.

Quote (6)

Syafa: 'Iki lo, neng bolongan!' (Pointing something).
Lintang: (Just looking).
Syafa: "Itu lo, hewan, itu lo..."
Lintang: (Just looking).

Quote (6) in italics classified the information in a form of which contains re-initiation. Syafa try to inform again the presence of the animal in the hole because the first information, 'Iki lo, neng bolongan !' Did not catch Lintang's

attention. Conversation between Syafa and Lintang only occurs in one round because Lintang still not give any response even Syafa has repeated her explanation.

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the research can be argued that *structural elements* of toddlers conversation consist of: (1) initiation (I) which has a following types: question, greeting, orders, invitations, complaints, requests, and express capabilities; (2) response (R) which has the following types: action, statement, invitation, question, advice, complaint, prohibition, request, capabilities, information, and blank response; (3) feedback (F) in the form of information accompanied by expression of feelings; (4) response as initiation (RI) which has variations of following types: question, order, information, complaint, invitation, statement, answer, advice, rejection, acceptance, request, prohibition, expressions of feeling, action, expression of sound; (5) informative (Inf) in the form of information; and (6) re-initiation (Ir). Results of this study appear to be similar with the result produced by Rani [15], just in case the variations of the elements are different. This is possible because of differences in the context and purpose of the conversation. Rani's study described of regular conversation of childrens, but this study described of conversation of toddlers in social interaction.

Toddler conversations often occur in short rotation, one or two rounds of conversation. This is assumed because of the following: (1) the context of the underlying conversation hardly allows children to talk with a long round; (2) their ability is limited; (3) the initiation of which appeared do not provoke the emergence of further response. However, with increasing age and a wider social sense, their conversation can possibly grows. This is in line with the theory of *psycho-sociolinguistic* [20] that the language and its development is a *two-individual intellectual activity* and *basic social activities*. Their social activities will make them to learn to speak or communicate in a variety of social contexts. Social interaction motivate children to learn the language and that interaction support them to teaching languages. Because this theory emphasizes the social dimension of language, then this theory is actually emphasizes pragmatic aspects. Cook [11] says that the range of languages pragmatic means relations with physical elements, social, and psychological.

Please note that toddlers is the golden age of human being [21]. Development of their intelligence increased from 50% to 80% [19]. The high intelligence will certainly bring considerable influence to the development of other aspects, such as their language development. Therefore, the creation of adequate speaking environment for children is needed, so their language can develop optimally.

On the one hand, what was said by Jalongo not differ with the opinion of Vygotsky in *sociocultural* theory. He argues that the cognitive development of children must be understood in the context of the culture in which he lives. He believea that children can change, both in formal and informal situations through caregive, peers, and tutor. Changes that may occur because it is influenced by the power of the values of their cultural group. Gradually, regulation and assistance to the child by others to be internalized in the child's own self [22]. To that end, the creation of adequate learning environment for children is necessary so as to enable their language development.

According to Vygotsky [23], children construct their own knowledge and understanding, and they are not passively receive knowledge given to him. The process of knowledge formation occurs through a process of social interaction. According to him, the social context plays an important role in the mental development of children. Mental development does not just happen internally in children, but also through the exchange of ideas with others. Therefore, he asserts that the child essentially has two levels of development, the level of development (1) Actual: development of the child's mental function that occurs on its own capabilities and (2) potential: development child's mental function that occurs because of the help of others. Therefore, creating an environment that allows children to exchange ideas with other people is helping the development of their language.

In contrast to the views and Jalongo Vygotsky, Piaget [24] in *cognitive development theory* says that in essence, speaking activities not only reflect the activity of individual intellectual and social activity, but physical activity has a big role. According to the theory, there is a functional relationship between physical action, mental action, and the development of children's logical thinking. The third aspect of the relationship above will appear in the language and behavior of the child in accordance with its phases based on their age. Therefore, the efforts to foster physical development of children is necessary so that they can grow well so they will develop language. Taking into account some of the above theory can be put forward the following points: (1) the increase of age and a wider social sense, child language is possible to develop, (2) the development of the child's way of thought will follow their age and affected to their language development; and (3) child physical development help create their language development.

5. CONCLUSION

Structural elements of toddlers conversation consist of: (1) initiation, (2) response, (3) feedback, (4) response as initiation, (5) informative, and (6) re-initiation (Ir) that occurs in a short rotation, one or two rounds of conversation that it shows by limited language skills demonstrated by their response to repeat the speech initiation; initiation is often not addressed (blank response), and often responded in the form of action; response action indicates that toddlers understanding run faster than their ability of speech.

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